

## Message Text

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ACTION OPR-02

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 AID-05 CU-04 /021 W

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R 131532Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2951

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 0961

FOR A/OS DR. GRAHAM PARSONS

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: ASCH, SY

SUBJECT: DAMASCUS COMMUNITY SCHOOL

1. THE TWO AMERICAN TEACHERS AT THE DAMASCUS COMMUNITY SCHOOL HAVE DONE MUCH SINCE THEIR ARRIVAL TO IMPROVE THE EDUCATIONAL QUALITY OF THE SCHOOL. HOWEVER, IT IS CLEAR THAT IF OVER THE LONG TERM THE SCHOOL IS TO ATTAIN ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS IT MUST HAVE A WELL-TRAINED, EXPERIENCED, PRINCIPAL. FOR EXAMPLE, AT THE PRESENT TIME SCHOOL IS HINDERED BY INADEQUATE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, NO REGULAR FACULTY MEETINGS, LACK OF CENTRALIZED NOR PLANNED CONTROL FOR ORDERING BOOKS AND EQUIPMENT. ALSO, FOR THE GOOD OF STUDENTS ALREADY ENROLLED, MORE PLANNING AND SCREENING SHOULD BE GIVEN BEFORE ACCEPTING NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING STUDENTS.

2. ON DECEMBER 2, 1974, AT THE MEETING OF THE SCHOOL'S BOARD OF GOVERNORS, DR. PARSONS STATED THAT THE SCHOOL NEEDED A FULL TIME AMERICAN PRINCIPAL AND INDICATED THAT A/OS WOULD TRY TO RECRUIT A QUALIFIED PERSON AND THAT GRANT FUNDS WOULD BE PROVIDED FOR THIS PURPOSE. MRS. BITAR, THE PRESENT PRINCIPAL, FULLY EXPECTS THAT THIS WILL HAPPEN, WHICH PARTIALLY EXPLAINS THE PRESENT ABSENCE OF ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTION AT THE SCHOOL. IT IS, THEREFORE, VERY IMPORTANT THAT WE BE ADVISED ASAP OF THE STATUS OF RECRUITING AN AMERICAN PRINCIPAL. IF PROSPECTS NOT GOOD, MRS. BITAR SHOULD BE INFORMED AND ASKED TO CONTINUE AS PRINCIPAL FOR ANOTHER YEAR.

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3. THE OVERSEAS SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRES ARE ALMOST READY FOR SUBMISSION. WE ARE REQUESTING THE SAME AMOUNT OF GRANT AID TO COVER THE COST FOR THE TWO AMERICAN TEACHERS WHOSE CONTRACTS HAVE ONE MORE YEAR TO RUN. WE PLAN TO INCREASE SCHOOL FEES BY APPROXIMATELY 40 PERCENT IN ORDER TO GENERATE A RESERVE FOR BUILDING EXPANSION AND LIKE EXPENSES. OUR SUCCESS IN THIS REGARD WILL DEPEND ON WHETHER THE INCREASED FEES CAUSE SOME PARENTS TO WITHDRAW THEIR CHILDREN. HOWEVER, WE MUST GIVE THE STUDENTS AND PARENTS SOMETHING IN RETURN FOR THE INCREASED FEES. THAT IS WHY BOARD AND EMBASSY BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT TO PLAN FOR AN AMERICAN PRINCIPAL EITHER IN SY75-76 OR SY76-77 AND TO BUDGET THE NECESSARY GRANT FUNDS TO COVER THE PRINCIPAL'S SALARY, HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION COSTS.

4. MRS. BITAR ALSO HAS ASKED WHEN WE CAN EXPECT TO RECEIVE THE FILM SLIDES AND THE LIBRARY CATALOG DR. PARSONS SAID HE WOULD SEND.

5. EARLY REPLY APPRECIATED.  
MURPHY

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